

## Fronte Vacuo – guest lecture

### ***Humane Methods: Sounds from the world's ending.***

***Music, algorithms and more-than-human bodies in transdisciplinary performance.***

Monday 22.05.2023, 10:00–11:30 — mdw Future Art Lab, Vortragssaal VZG48

The saga “Humane Methods” by Fronte Vacuo is a world where body art, dancetheater, sound, video and emerging technology enmesh in tumultuous biomes. Radically transdisciplinary at heart, the group’s aesthetics relies on methods for real-time sound, video and light design that enable sensorially immersive experiences. These strive to expand the borders of theatrical performance by building on the legacy of experiential theatre, experimental music and sound design, and media art.

The music and sounds of Fronte Vacuo performances emerge from a layered craftsmanship combining real-time data from custom-made computer vision systems, body and spatial sensors, AI and machine learning, musical instruments, binaural composition and spatialization. Much of the group's hardware technology is built by hand, including hacked cameras, modified video monitors, and bodily instruments for biophysical music.

A recurrent research question for the group is how to work with an AI system that can perform as an actor. That is, how to create an AI that does not dictate instructions to human actors, or generate textual, sonic or video material, but rather one that interacts with human, non-human performers and audiences in space and time. This is crucial to avoid any stereotypical characterization of AI - be it utopian or dystopian - and manifest, instead, the nature of algorithmic intelligence as it is: a complicated combination of determinism, randomness and cultural beliefs. Taking cues from this approach to music making in transdisciplinary performance, the talk will also offer an insight into the general collaboration process at the core of Fronte’s work and the group’s distinctive mode of dynamic authorship.

Fronte Vacuo is a transdisciplinary performance group founded in 2019 by Marco Donnarumma, Andrea Familiarì and Margherita Pevere, and currently in residency at the Volkstheater Wien together with set designer Anna Cingi. Fronte Vacuo works can be understood as social experiments executed through uncanny methods of interaction and rigorous work on symbolism. Their materials are human and nonhuman bodies, organic symbionts, artificial intelligence machines, spatial sounds and images.

The group’s ongoing project, Humane Methods (2019–ad infinitum), is the saga of a broken society reemerging from a ruinous futuristic past. The stories of this fictional society become stage productions, street performances and hybrid live installations defined by an intense sensorial charge. Their works tour regularly and have been shown, most notably, at Münchner Kammerspiele (DE), Radialsystem (DE), HAU Berlin (DE), Donaufestival (AT), Volkstheater Wien (AT), tanzhaus NRW (DE), CTM Festival (DE), Kontejner (HR), PACT Zollverein (DE), Romaeuropa Festival (IT), Centre des Arts Enghien-les-Bains (FR). <https://frontevacuo.com>

